Oswaldo Guayasamín: A study of the Ecuadorian artist's mid-twentieth century reinterpretation of *indigenismo*

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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, I investigate Andean *indigenismo*[1] and its potential as a politically and socially radical movement. By examining Oswaldo Guayasamín's shift in avant-garde, *indigenista*[2] work to a more muted, state-controlled position, we can trace the trajectory of *indigenismo* over time. As a framework for such trajectory, I discuss *indigenismo* as defined by José Carlos Mariátegui in the 1920s, *indigenista* works by Guayasamín in the 1940s, and state-sponsored *indigenista* works by Guayasamín from the 1950s. I focus on Guayasamín's early works *La Huelga* (1940),[3] *Los Trabajadores* (1942),[4] and *Niños Muertos* (1942).[5] In these artworks, rather than portraying somber and stoic indigenous peoples as seen earlier in the twentieth century, Guayasamín portrayed indigenous peoples engaged in their community. In doing so, he depicted indigenous peoples in a modern setting, inserting them into a modern reality from which they were often excluded.

However, as I argue, these works also foreshadow Guayasamín's problematic tendency to use indigenous peoples as symbolic figures defined by their socio-political situation. In his first series, *Huacayñán* (1946-1952),[6] I argue that Guayasamín pushed these negative stereotypes further due in part to the Ecuadorian government's role in commissioning his art and using *indigenismo* to rebuild national identity. By examining the trajectory of *indigenismo* through this specific lens, I demonstrate the variability of *indigenismo* over time. In particular, I discuss the negative and positive aspects at each stage, illustrating how the limits of *indigenismo* changed with each new iteration.

[1] Indigenism.
[2] Indigenist.
[3] *The Strike*.
[4] *The Workers*.
[5] *Dead Children*.
[6] *The Ways of Tears*.

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INTRODUCTION

Indigenismo is a malleable concept. Loosely applied to politics, literature, and art in Latin American countries, *indigenistas* consistently defined and redefined *indigenismo* to their own advantage. Reiterations of *indigenismo* differ based on region and time period but—generally speaking—most advocate for the rights and visibility of indigenous peoples in Latin America. Unfortunately, *indigenismo* did not always benefit indigenous peoples.

Depending on the context of the movement, *indigenismo* consistently shifted between being an avant-garde movement that uplifted indigenous communities and being a state-sponsored idea that falsely celebrated indigeneity. In some cases, *indigenismo* was celebrated only in relationship to *mestizaje*, a term that literally translates to miscegenation but implies the cultural identification of mixed European and indigenous ancestry. When used in relation to *mestizaje*, *indigenismo* de-centers and de-prioritizes indigenous communities, often resulting in the continued oppression of marginalized communities. Thus, it is important to discern whether certain movements of *indigenismo* negatively or positively affect indigenous-identified communities, both through their philosophy and their actions.

This thesis uses art as a proxy for understanding the potential of the Andean *indigenista* movement. In particular, I look at how Ecuadorian artist Oswaldo Guayasamín's artwork straddles a moment in which *indigenismo* switches from existing as an avant-garde movement to a state-sponsored movement. By tracing how Guayasamín builds upon previous understandings of *indigenismo* to create politically radical work, I trace the trajectory of *indigenismo* as a potentially radical movement. However, as the Ecuadorian government begins to use *indigenismo* as a national policy to recover national pride, Guayasamín's work becomes less radical and even perpetuates harmful stereotypes, including anti-Blackness.

This thesis assumes that most readers are not familiar with Latin America and Latin American art. As a result, I would like to define the following terms: *indigenista*, mestizx, and afrolatinx peoples. *Indigenista* is the adjective form of *indigenismo*. In this thesis, *indigenista* is used to describe works or artists that conform to the philosophies of *indigenismo*. Mestizx refers to people of mixed European and indigenous ancestry, and afrolatinx peoples refers to Latin Americans of African ancestry. I use mestizx and afrolatinx—as opposed to mestizo and afrolatino, respectively—in order to remove an imposed male identity upon these terms. By using the term "peoples" after afrolatinx, I hope to include the larger community of the African diaspora and recognize that afrolatinx is a complicated identity within itself. Throughout this thesis, I also use the term "Black" interchangeably with the term afrolatinx peoples.

Lastly, Quechua and Quichua refer to different languages and groups. Quechua is predominantly used to describe the family of indigenous languages spoken in the Andean region. Quechua may also refer to groups that speak these languages (i.e. Quechua people). In general, Quechua is most often used when referring to indigenous groups and languages in Peru. On the other hand, Quichua is a specific part of the Quechua language and groups. Quichua-speakers live predominantly in Ecuador.

For this reason, I use Quechua when referring to Peruvian indigeneity and Quichua when referring to Ecuadorian indigeneity. It should also be noted that Quichua and Quechua do not accurately describe all indigenous groups and languages in the Andean region. As a result, instead of using exclusively the terms Quechua and Quichua, I use indigenous peoples.

CHAPTER ONE: Mariátegui's *Indigenismo*

This chapter examines the inconsistencies between *indigenismo* as defined by José Carlos Mariátegui and its implementation in the 1920s. Through an analysis of Mariátegui's *indigenista* magazine, *Amauta* (1926-1930), and *indigenista* book, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1928), I argue that Mariátegui's support of artist José Sabogal's work demonstrates the gaps between his philosophy and his actions. Such gaps reveal overarching issues with Mariátegui's version of *indigenismo*, gaps that Guayasamín's later works would confront.

Scholars consider Mexico and the Andean countries in South America to be the two primary sources of *indigenismo* in the early to mid-twentieth century. Both regions approached the movement differently. In Mexico, *indigenismo* became a keystone of the post-revolutionary government's identity as a new nation, leading artists such as José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros to create iconic *indigenista* [indigenist] works and manifestos. In Andean countries, *indigenismo* was not adopted by governments but rather championed by the avant-garde. In particular, Peruvian intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930) defined his vision for *indigenismo* in his ground-breaking and highly influential journal *Amauta*.

In addition to endorsing *indigenismo*, Mariátegui was also one of the first South Americans to voice the need for a Marxist state. As a result, Mariátegui's *indigenismo* is heavily intertwined with this political ideology, and his magazine *Amauta* often juxtaposed the need for *indigenismo* and Marxism against one another. Within each issue, Mariátegui reproduced "articles by anti-Spanish authors like Luis E. Valcárcel" as well as "articles by Marx, Lenin, or

Lunacharsky."[7] Moreover, almost every issue of *Amauta* included commentary on records, music, and modern art.[8] Consequently, Mariátegui repeatedly expressed the idea that *indigenismo* as a socio-political movement must utilize art and literature to be successful.

In 1928, Mariátegui published his most memorable work, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*. Throughout this series of essays, Mariátegui states that capitalistic forces oppress indigenous peoples, an idea that he further cemented by titling the first essay in the book "The Problem of the Indian." Even more so, the essay begins with the sentence:

> Any treatment of the problem of the Indian—written or verbal—that fails or refuses to recognize it as a socioeconomic problem is but a sterile, theoretical exercise destined to be completely discredited.[9]

This statement distinguishes Mariátegui's philosophy from previous understandings of indigenous peoples as he emphasizes the socioeconomic context of their struggle and advocated for the consistent acknowledgement of such in all manifestations of *indigenismo*. Given this statement, it should come as no surprise that Mariátegui was a devout Marxist. Not only did he dedicate a section of *Amauta* to understanding Marxist theory in a Peruvian context, but he also founded the Partido Socialista del Perú [Peruvian Socialist Party] that same year.[10]

Within the endnotes of the essay, Mariátegui elaborates on this position, quoting a previous statement by him: "As long as the vindication of the Indian is kept on a philosophical and cultural plane, it lacks a concrete historical base. To acquire such a base—that is, to acquire a physical reality—it must be converted into an economic and political vindication." *Indigenistas*

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[7] José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*, trans. Marjory Urquidi (Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1971), xvi.

[8] Ibid., xvi-xvii.

[9] Ibid., 22.

[10] Servais Thissen, *Mariátegui: La Aventura Del Hombre Nuevo: Biografía Ilustrada Con Más De 500 Fotografías De La Época* (Lima: Editorial Horizonte, 2017), 446.

must "recognize it concretely as a social, economic, and political problem."[11] In other words, this statement clarifies Mariátegui's distaste for picturesque representations and understandings of indigenous identity. In Mariátegui's eyes, to be truly *indigenista*, one must understand the economic and political reality of indigenous peoples; one must understand what is oppressing them, not just recognize that they are oppressed. Only in doing so are we able to give indigenous peoples agency to overcome oppressive forces.

In the following essay, Mariátegui states that we cannot reduce the oppression of indigenous peoples to an "administrative, pedagogical, ethnic, or moral problem."[12] He asserts that *indigenistas* should not romanticize indigenous people. In fact, he believed that true *indigenistas* must accept that indigenous peoples are oppressed by economic factors and "[take] the least romantic and literary position possible. [They] are not satisfied to assert the Indian's right to education, culture, progress and heaven. [They] begin by categorically asserting [indigenous peoples'] right to land."[13] In this sense, Mariátegui rejected the exoticization of indigenous peoples and advocated for tangible and specific rights, ones that would enable indigenous peoples to take action and be more in control of their own political and economic situation. Most importantly, he asserts that *indigenistas* must be overtly political.

Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality's longest essay contains Mariátegui's critiques of contemporaneous Peruvian literature as well as a brief discussion of the importance of art. At the beginning of this section, Mariátegui reiterates that "authentic indigenists, who should not be confused with those who exploit indigenous themes out of mere love of the exotic, deliberately…[redress] political and economic wrongs…."[14] He extends this concept to art and

[11] Ibid., 29.
[12] Ibid., 31.
[13] Ibid., 31.
[14] Ibid., 272-273.

literature, advocating for the need for them to take a political stance. Lastly, he describes the "indigenist current" as "lyrical rather than naturalist or *costumbrista*,"[15] meaning that *indigenismo* is emotional and socially aware. This awareness exists in opposition to the apathetic *costumbrista* paintings of the previous century, a movement geared towards categorizing indigenous customs and peoples with little commentary on socio-political inequality.[16]

The ideas expressed in *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*, with particular respect to *indigenista* art, are visually explored in *Amauta*. As stated earlier, Mariátegui reproduced works in *Amauta* that he considered to be in line with *indigenista* ideas or contained what he considered "a revolutionary essence." For him, any art that opposed the bourgeois, even if not the Peruvian bourgeois, agreed with *indigenista* thought.[17] Mariátegui used *Amauta* to argue that "visual art should use forms and materials to communicate immediate emotional and cultural meaning… and that it should be neither literary nor emphasize narrative."[18] As a result, the works have no coherent style but are presented as visual manifestations of anti-bourgeois sentiment.[19]

Reproduced in the middle of the magazine and spanning four pages, Mariátegui juxtaposed artworks of different styles and subject matters against one another. In doing so, the spreads suggest that the works are "variants within a group,"[20] that they are all avant-garde not because of their formal characteristics, but because of their context. In essence, Mariátegui placed *indigenismo* within the larger context of revolutionary thought and art of the early

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[15] Ibid., 273.

[16] Juan Fernando. Pérez, *Catálogo De La Sala De Arte De La República* (Quito: Museo Nacional Del Banco Central Del Ecuador, 1995), 9-10.

[17] Michele Greet, *Beyond National Identity: Pictorial Indigenism as a Modernist Strategy in Andean Art, 1920-1960* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 72.

[18] Harper Montgomery, *The Mobility of Modernism: Art and Criticism in 1920s Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 12.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Montgomery, 17.

twentieth century, regardless of geography. He saw the avant-garde as internationally connected and hoped that the acceptance or admiration of one facet of vanguardism would further his own cause.

For example, in one spread from September 1928, Mariátegui included a Cubist work by Emilio Pettoruti (1892-1971) alongside a Surrealist work by Juan Devescóvi and two Primitivist works by Carlos Mérida.[21, 22] He does not comment on the differences between the works. Instead, he invited the viewer to draw their own conclusions. Moreover, by grouping them within the context of the magazine, Mariátegui showed how their subject matter is similar, revolutionary, and anti-bourgeois, highlighting how context is more important than style.

Although Mariátegui refused "to endorse a 'leftist' artistic style,"[23] he actively opposed realism. In this sense, he referred mostly to stagnant depictions of indigenous peoples with indigenous clothing and settings, a style that is best described as *costumbrista*. Mariátegui believed that the artist had a responsibility to incorporate elements of indigenous peoples' socio-political situation otherwise they could fall into repeating the faults of *costumbrismo*. He held that art could not and should not be separated from the key takeaways of philosophy, being that *indigenista* art had a duty to generate revolutionary takeaways in one way or another. Despite this insistent and aggressive understanding of art, Mariátegui's championing of José Sabogal's (1888-1956) work demonstrates the gaps between Mariátegui's philosophy and the implementation of such philosophy in *indigenista* art.

[21] The works reproduced by Mérida can be loosely described as Primitivist. They are flat and stylized, emphasizing line rather than form. Like many Primitivist works, the figures' features are reduced to simple shapes. In this sentence, I merely mean to emphasize how Mérida's stylization differs from Pettoruti's and Devescóvi's.

[22] This page of reproductions was reproduced and discussed in Montgomery's book on page 16-19. I have also viewed this issue of *Amauta* in person.

[23] Montgomery, 21.

José Sabogal was perhaps the most prominently featured artist in *Amauta*. During *Amauta*'s publication, Sabogal worked closely with Mariátegui throughout the 1920s as he oversaw the magazine's design, and even persuaded Mariátegui to name the magazine "amauta," a Quechua word for wise man.[24] Moreover, he designed the "emblematic image of the indigenous figure as an austere, resolved, and constant presence on the early covers—to the point of becoming its logo" (Figure 1).[25] It is this image of indigenous peoples that *Amauta* would continue to push for and that, most importantly, Mariátegui considered to be the most in line with his philosophy. As art historian Michele Greet discovered, "In an article written in 1927, Mariátegui asserted that Sabogal's work exemplified what 'new Peruvian art' should be…."[26] To Mariátegui, Sabogal's work was not the picturesque representations of indigenous peoples that he so despised but the best manifestation of his understanding of pictorial *indigenismo*. According to Mariátegui, Sabogal's ability to empathize with his subjects and to convey strong emotion in his paintings made him a prime example of an *indigenista* artist.

However, some critics find Sabogal's work to be, indeed, picturesque.[27] In many of his artworks, Sabogal represented indigenous peoples in traditional dress and settings. Granted, they are often portrayed as powerful, looking directly at the viewer with an intense gaze (see Figure 2 and Figure 3), but they are non-specific people—generalized understandings of indigenous

[24] Natalia Majluf, "Indigenism as Avant-Garde: The Graphic Arts," in *The avant-garde networks of Amauta: Argentina, Mexico, and Peru in the 1920s*, ed. Beverly Adams and Natalia Majluf (Austin: Blanton Museum of Art, 2019), 141.

[25] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 140.

[26] Ibid., 77.

[27] Majluf and other critics disagree and consider Sabogal's work to straddle a distant past and contemporary reality. This idea is explored in her essay "Indigenism as Avant-Garde: The Graphic Arts."

subjects.[28] The viewer is only able to conclude that the subject is a specific or "real" person from the work's title.[29]

In some depictions, such as *El Sembrador* [The Sower] (1927) and *Los Pongos* [Indigenous workers] (1925) (Figure 4 and Figure 5), Sabogal represented his subjects at work.[30] In doing so, he often generalizes them even more, reducing them to their roles as laborers. In *Los Pongos*, Sabogal gets closer to depicting the genuine sociopolitical hardship that indigenous peoples endure, hiding the figures' faces as they curl inward due to the weight of their cargo. This work is clear in its condemnation of the exploitation of the indigenous communities, just as Mariátegui envisioned, but it is rare in the context of Mariátegui's oeuvre. Moreover, it still provides a silent acceptance of conditions, failing to suggest any sort of rebellion or discontentment among the figures.

In contrast, *El Sembrador* once again demonstrates Sabogal's tendency to generalize his subjects. In this work, the figure represented is dressed in traditional clothing, complete with a traditional tunic and large earrings. *El Sembrador* features a glorified worker, one who recalls the image of a pre-colonial indigenous workers and presents them as a modern hero.[31] Consequently, the viewer is unable to draw emotion from the figure or empathize with them, negating Mariátegui's justification for Sabogal's work. Additionally, the work draws upon a foreign past to promote indigenous peoples, thus removing indigenous peoples more and more from a modern reality.

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[28] Sabogal's use of the woodcut, as seen in the *Indian* and *The Sower*, could be a reason for his tendency to generalize subjects. As Majluf states in her essay, Sabogal used woodcuts as a way to associate with "formal explorations of the avant-garde."

[29] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 81.

[30] According to Greet, Sabogal began to depict indigenous peoples at work only after connecting with *Amauta*.

[31] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 79.

This is not to say that Sabogal's work is not an improvement from previous depictions of indigenous peoples. In fact, in comparison to *costumbrista* paintings, Sabogal's work makes strides in terms of having more positive depictions of indigenous peoples. Even more so, his work, alongside the work of other *indigenista* artists, did indeed result in more representation of indigenous peoples in the arts. However, steps forward do not make an artist–or a movement–immune to criticism. It is very possible to praise Sabogal's work for what it did right while still being able to recognize what it did wrong.

On that note, this analysis hopes to emphasize that Mariátegui's interpretation of Sabogal's work did not always line up with how his work was or can be interpreted today. In other words, there is a disconnect between the two. Sabogal's work did provide a space for viewers to empathize with indigenous peoples, something that seems so simple now but was relatively unheard of in early twentieth century Latin America, but it also put forward an unrealistic image of indigenous peoples. He presented people of indigenous descent as Other, as separate from modern Andean society. Sabogal's work represented a powerful indigenous population—but in a distant past. By failing to provide a modern context, Sabogal's work often fell short of Mariátegui's emphasis on the need for overt contextualization of indigenous peoples' oppressive forces.

As a result, it is through Sabogal's work that we can begin to see the holes in Mariátegui's perception of *indigenismo*. These static and classificatory works recall nineteenth century *costumbrista* paintings, not modern twentieth century works,[32] the exact kind of art that Mariátegui so vehemently opposed. The key connection between Sabogal's works and *costumbrismo* is the lack of agency. By not depicting the indigenous peoples in action, be it through active emotions or through active movement, Sabogal's work becomes passive,

[32] Ibid.

providing little avenue for change. Combined with the implications of the past, Sabogal's work removes the will of indigenous peoples to act for themselves and thus proves the contradictions in Mariátegui's *indigenismo*.

Despite his understanding of indigenous peoples within a concurrent capitalistic society, Mariátegui was unable to divorce his personal prejudices from his critiques of literature and art.[33] Although comprised of valid and prominent points, his interpretations of literature and art reveal that Mariátegui's *indigenismo* was incomplete in realization. As seen by his support of Sabogal, Mariátegui's *indigenismo* tended to separate indigenous peoples from modern society. An example of such is his propensity to reference the idea of the stoic, indigenous farmer throughout *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*.

For example, Mariátegui wrote: "[t]he indigenous race is a race of farmers. The Inca people were peasants, normally engaged in agriculture and shepherding. Their industries and arts were typically domestic and rural."[34] Within this statement, Mariátegui describes indigenous peoples not as descendants of Incas but rather as Incas. He does not see them as a modern population, free to choose if they want to continue in an agrarian society or not. In this case, he speaks for them, removing their ability to speak for themselves.

This inconsistency in Mariátegui's *indigenismo* did not go unnoticed. In 1939, Peruvian poet César Moro, one of the first Latin Americans to join the surrealist movement, criticized *indigenismo* for pretending "to alleviate the great misery and total ostracism that Indians suffer in Peru by energetically portraying them in made-up canvases or in tourist-trade knickknacks…."[35]

[33] Mariátegui, xxxi.

[34] Mariátegui, 34-35.

[35] César Moro. "On Painting in Peru," in Manifestos and Polemics in Latin American Modern Art, ed. and trans. Patrick Frank (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), 65.

In another sentence, Moro describes the indigenous peoples depicted in *indigenista* works as "hollow" and "like market dolls."[36]

The strongest part of Moro's criticism, however, is when he states that "indigenist painters believe neither in the Indian's future nor in their past… For [indigenists], the Indians have always and only been Quechua… The indigenists see only the decrepit Indian that the poisonous memories of the colonial period have left behind, the Indian dressed in multicolored rags."[37] In this statement, Moro not only denotes *indigenismo*'s obsession with the past but also points out that Mariátegui's *indigenismo* is exclusive to Quechua people only. It fails to include other indigenous populations of the Andes. In doing so, Moro exposes Mariátegui's need to latch onto an idealistic Incan empire, begging the question: if Mariátegui truly were for the liberation of indigenous peoples, why did he base his philosophy on just one group?

Moro continues to sum up his criticisms in the following statement:

> The indigenists do not paint the present reality of the Indian, because that reality implies the fading of bright colors and the loss of the picturesque. Rather than lose their subject matter, they prefer to aid at any cost the perpetuation of the state of things that will guarantee them future frescoes and pleasant scenes ready for easy export.[38]

In essence, Moro argues that the *indigenistas* are stuck in the past, depicting people of indigenous descent as they were in the colonial era rather than how they are in the modern era. He does not negate the current suffering of indigenous peoples but rather calls upon *indigenistas* to recognize the harsh reality of it, hinting that the failure to do so is the root of their hypocrisy. In this particular point, Moro's criticism rings especially relevant to a twenty-first century viewer, as Sabogal's works and other visual manifestations of *indigenismo* fail to be grounded in the reality he so aggressively championed.

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[36] Ibid., 66.
[37] Ibid., 68.
[38] Ibid., 69.

As Moro points out, one of the largest issues with Mariátegui's recommended representations of indigenous peoples is that they are fictionalized versions of real indigenous peoples. They exist in an unrealistic quasi-colonial world—one that the modern viewer can neither accurately imagine nor place themselves in. As Moro states, the indigenous peoples Mariátegui wished to support are not the people that are being represented in *indigenista* art.

While describing the current state of indigenous peoples, Moro makes an interesting claim, one which summarizes the issues with Mariátegui's *indigenismo*. He states: "The Indian… resembles any exploited person."[39] By this statement, Moro calls out *indigenismo*'s tendency to glamorize indigenous peoples, to ignore their hardship in favor of depicting their traditions. Indigenous peoples do, indeed, have beautiful traditions, but that is not the entirety of their reality. Like other marginalized groups, indigenous peoples are subject to a variety of struggles, ones that are just as much a part of their lives as their traditions are. According to Moro, the *indigenistas* "prefer to ignore this Indian because he is not distinctive enough in appearance."[40] In this comment, Moro suggests that *indigenistas* strive to depict a distinct indigenous person, one that could not be mistaken for non-indigenous, hence their tendency to not represent modern indigenous peoples who exist not in a colonial vacuum but in a modernized world with modern clothing and settings.

In spite of these flaws, Mariátegui's *indigenismo* created a well-defined understanding of the movement, particularly in relation to Andean countries. Although not implemented fully, he thoroughly critiqued picturesque depictions of indigenous subjects and advocated for art's need to make a stance. Amid his more prominent arguments, Mariátegui consistently described the need for art to evoke an emotional response from the viewer. Perhaps wrongfully so, Mariátegui

[39] Ibid., 68.
[40] Ibid., 69.

praised Sabogal's work for its ability to connect the viewer to the subject through the use of emotion. Following a similar line of thinking, Mariátegui praised César Vallejo in *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* for being likewise emotionally connected to the pain that indigenous peoples experience, stating that "Vallejo feels all human suffering"[41] and conveys such suffering to the reader.

In his discussion of Marxism, Mariátegui makes a brief comment concerning the subject of empathy. Deliberately quoting Manuel González Prada, a Peruvian politician and contemporary of Mariátegui, he states: "'the condition of the Indian can improve in two ways: either the heart of the oppressor will be moved to take pity and recognize the rights of the oppressed, or the spirit of the oppressed will find the valor needed to turn on the oppressors.'"[42] It is the former part of this sentence that is Mariátegui's legacy. When defending Sabogal's work, Mariátegui assumed that Sabogal's use of emotion could "move" the "heart of the oppressor." Although Sabogal's work failed to do so, it is this concept—the idea that oppressors could learn to empathize with indigenous subjects and that such empathy would improve their situation—that would come to define Oswaldo Guayasamín's understanding of *indigenismo*.

In short, Mariátegui's *indigenismo* laid the groundwork for the understanding of indigenous peoples in Andean countries in the twentieth century. He articulated the idea that indigenous peoples deserved to be uplifted from oppressive forces, such as lack of land ownership, that hindered their advancement in society. He also asserted that non-indigenous peoples had a stake in the suffering of indigenous peoples, that mestizx-identified people in Andean countries must be concerned with the oppression of other groups. Lastly, although rightfully criticized for his hypocrisy, Mariátegui actively condemned exoticized representations

[41] Mariátegui, 254.
[42] Mariátegui, 25.

of indigenous peoples and explained that a movement that helps indigenous peoples would need to abandon such romanticized and static portrayals.

Mariátegui provides an interesting beginning for understanding how *indigenismo* was a complicated movement. By looking at Mariátegui's support of Sabogal's artwork, we can begin to piece together how a movement that aimed to do good often worked against itself. Moreover, we can see how artists, such as Guayasamín, reframed Mariátegui's philosophy and attempted to rectify some of his errors, all while making hypocritical errors themselves. In the following chapter, I will address how Guayasamín's modern understanding of indigenous peoples realized aspects of Mariátegui's *indigenismo* while continuing to perpetuate negative aspects of *indigenismo* as well. In doing so, I will continue to provide a nuanced understanding of *indigenismo* in Andean countries in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER TWO: Guayasamín's Early Works

This chapter examines Oswaldo Guayasamín's early works and their potential as positive representations of indigenous peoples. First, this chapter will briefly explain how the intellectual Benjamín Carrión (1898-1979) and artist Eduardo Kingman (1913-1997) responded to Mariátegui in the 1930s and 1940s. Then, this chapter will discuss Guayasamín's early career and how he fits into the larger narrative of Ecuadorian art in the mid-twentieth century. Lastly, this chapter will analyze various works from Guayasamín's first era, such as *La Huelga* (1940), *Los Trabajadores* (1942), and *Niños Muertos* (1942).

I argue that Guayasamín's early works demonstrate *indigenismo*'s potential to positively represent indigenous peoples by redressing some of the problematic aspects of Mariátegui's pictorial *indigenismo*. Starting with *La Huelga*, I suggest that Guayasamín placed indigenous peoples in a modern setting that invited the viewer to empathize with the figures represented. However, as seen in *Los Trabajadores* and *Niños Muertos*, Guayasamín also continued to represent indigenous peoples as poor, generic, and oppressed, harmful stereotypes associated with indigenous peoples that would be pushed even further later in his career.

Although Oswaldo Guayasamín's exposure to *Amauta* is not well-documented,[43] Mariátegui's ideas were well-known in Latin America, particularly in the Andean region. Mariátegui himself considered *indigenismo* to be a local application of an international avant-garde, meaning that he did not want to limit *indigenismo* to existing only in a Peruvian context.[44] By including a "breadth of leftist and avant-gardist artists from Europe and Latin America,"

[43] Guayasamín painted a portrait of Mariátegui in 1994. This portrait is reproduced on the cover of *Mariátegui Total* Volume II.

[44] Natalia Majluf, "The Left and the Latin American Avant-Gardes," in *The avant-garde networks of Amauta: Argentina, Mexico, and Peru in the 1920s*, ed. Beverly Adams and Natalia Majluf (Austin: Blanton Museum of Art, 2019), 71.

Mariátegui thought about "regional problems through a transnational, global lens."[45] He wanted *indigenismo* to liberate indigenous peoples in the Andean region, but he also wanted to liberate those oppressed by the bourgeois in various regions. In short, Mariátegui's philosophy was never meant to be limited to Peru; he always saw it as existing as an international movement. Given Ecuador's proximity to Peru, it is understandable why Mariátegui's philosophy permeated intellectual spheres throughout the Andean region.

Mariátegui served as a source for Benjamín Carrión, an Ecuadorian intellectual who founded the prominent newspaper *El Sol* and the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, a cultural institution that will be discussed in depth in Chapter Three. Carrión was familiar with Mariátegui's philosophy[46] and even began his book *Atahuallpa* (1934) with a quote from *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*.[47] While Carrión's philosophy paralleled Mariátegui's, it related *indigenismo* to Ecuadorian identity rather than to Peruvian identity. Like Mariátegui, Carrión also tended to glorify the Pre-Columbian past, but in contrast to Mariátegui, he "perceived cultural and linguistic homogenization" rather than "social and economic emancipation" as the best way to help indigenous peoples.[48] Carrión's importance in the Ecuadorian intellectual sphere and admiration of Mariátegui solidified Mariátegui's influence in the Ecuadorian avant-garde in the 1930s.

With respect to Ecuadorian artistic movements, Carrión was a prominent advocate for Ecuadorian *indigenista* art. In the 1950s, he would champion Guayasamín as one of the most

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[45] Montgomery, 13.

[46] According to a footnote of Greet's "Painting the Indian Nation," "We know definitively that Amauta reached an Ecuadorian audience since Benjamin Carrión, one of Ecuador's most important writers and cultural figures, wrote a eulogy praising Mariátegui's life and work and mentioning Amauta upon his death in 1930. The eulogy was reprinted in Maria Wiesse, José Carlos Mariátegui: Etapas de su vida. Obras Completas de José Carlos Mariátegui, vol. 10 (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1959), 87-100."

[47] Michele Greet, "Painting the Indian Nation: Pictorial Indigenism as a Modernist Strategy in Ecuadorian Art, 1920-1960," PhD diss., 2004, 46-47.

[48] Ibid.

influential Ecuadorian artists,[49] just as Mariátegui did with Sabogal. However, before meeting and supporting Guayasamín, Carrión supported Guayasamín's mentor, contemporary, and future rival Eduardo Kingman. Carrión saw Kingman's work as in agreement with his vision for Ecuadorian *indigenista* art. Carrión believed he expressed a "spirit of renovation, a focus on social concerns, and an interest in Ecuador's cultural heritage," all factors which Carrión had proclaimed in his book *Atahuallpa*, the same book he had begun with a reference to Mariátegui.[50]

Over the next few years, Carrión supported Kingman by providing him with his first mural commission.[51] In 1938, the two worked together on the magazine *Revista Mensual del Sindicato de Escritores y Artistas del Ecuador* [Monthly Magazine of the Union of Writers and Artists of Ecuador].[52] As Kingman's career flourished, his work began to mirror Carrión's ideas of *indigenismo*. He often emphasized class over race and portrayed indigenous peoples' socio-political situation rather than customs. Thus, we can see how Mariátegui's ideas manifested in the Ecuadorian art scene and served as a source for Carrión and, by proxy, Kingman.

Kingman was one of the first to represent indigenous peoples in a modern setting, presenting the idea that indigenous peoples and modernity are not mutually exclusive. For example, in his painting *Los Guandos* [The Haulers] (1941), Kingman represented indigenous peoples at work, characterized by large hands and stout bodies (Figure 6). Small details such as clothing and tools clarify that this work exists in the twentieth century rather than in a distant past. Additionally, the composition of the work is dynamic, a stark difference to the static

[49] Carlos A. Jáuregui, "Huacayñán (1952–1953) and the Biopolitics of In(ex)clusion," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 25, no. 1 (2016), doi:10.1080/13569325.2016.1143354.

[50] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 111.

[51] Later on, Carrión would also serve as a patron for Guayasamín. For more information on this, see the first section of "Huacayñán (1952–1953) and the biopolitics of in(ex)clusion" by Carlos A. Jáuregui.

[52] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 120.

portraits of indigenous peoples from Mariátegui's pictorial *indigenismo*. By oversaturating the painting with a variety of figures burdened by large hauls, Kingman critiqued the abuse of indigenous workers in the modern time, making *indigenismo* exist in the viewer's time, not in a past one.

To reiterate, representing indigenous peoples in a setting with modern aspects, such as modern clothing, tools, or narrative, is crucial because it counteracted understandings of indigenous peoples as separate from society. The portrayal of indigenous peoples in modern, oppressive settings makes the maltreatment of indigenous peoples something that exists in the viewer's reality. In other words, such depictions do not separate the viewer from indigenous peoples but imply that they exist in the same place, at the same time.

Kingman's work is significant as it depicts indigenous peoples in a modernized setting, something that Mariátegui's pictorial *indigenismo* failed to do. Moving forward, Guayasamín built upon Kingman's improvements of *indigenismo* implementing the use of emotion. As seen in Chapter One, Mariátegui called for the use of emotion in *indigenista* works and believed it to be the main reason for Sabogal's excellence as an *indigenista* painter. Through using emotion, not only did Guayasamín represent figures in a space similar to that of the viewer's, but he also used the figures' emotion to invite the viewer to have an emotional stake in their suffering. Whereas Kingman's works created a space for the viewer to think about the modern oppression of indigenous peoples, Guayasamín's works went even further by adding emotional energy to the mix.

Born in 1919, Guayasamín was only six years Kingman's junior. Unlike other *indigenistas*, Guayasamín identified as indigenous.[53] His father was of indigenous heritage, and

[53] "Yo soy un indio ¡Carajo!," YouTube video, 0:13, Lucherto, September 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEBHmAyMBXk.

his mother was mestiza, a fact critics often used to justify his activism.[54, 55] Following his removal from the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1936, Guayasamín continued to produce work and exist in creative spaces. In 1940, he submitted nine artworks to the Salon and was soon thereafter acclaimed by critics and artists alike, including Kingman. Due to Carrión's support, Kingman was commercially successful at this time and seen as one of the leading Ecuadorian artists. Seeing Guayasamín as a potential contemporary, Kingman offered him a one-man show, kickstarting the young artist's career.[56]

Guayasamín created over 4,000 works in his lifetime.[57] In comparison to his later works, which are more abstract in experimenting with texture and other avant-garde techniques, Guayasamín's earlier works are often more literal. In these earlier works, Guayasamín toyed with the representation of symbolic figures, exaggerated bodies, and ambiguous space, all elements that he would modify in his later series *Huacayñán* [The Ways of Tears]. Of his early works, I have chosen to discuss three, *La Huelga* [The Strike] (1940),[58] *Los Trabajadores* [The Workers] (1942), and *Niños Muertos* [Dead Children] (1942).

These artworks demonstrate Guayasamín's expansion of indigenismo as well as his adaptation of Kingman's visual style. He added an emotional element to pictorial indigenismo and co-opted Kingman's iconography of laborers with large hands and feet. By emotional energy, I mean the representations of figures with extreme expression, as seen in *La Huelga*, or

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[54] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 151.

[55] Guayasamín often inflated his personal background to justify his depictions of indigenous peoples. He identified as an indigenous person, but some literature, such as Angélica Ordóñez Charpentier's thesis "La construcción social de las 'razas' en el Ecuador. Un estudio de caso." investigate the ways in which Guayasamín's self-proclamation as an "Indian" was problematic. Moreover, while in Ecuador, I spoke with many street vendors about Guayasamín. Several told me that Guayasamín's father was mestizx, and his grandfather may or may not have identified as indigenous. Please refer to Ordóñez Charpentier's thesis for more information.

[56] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 153.

[57] Adolfo Montejo Navas, "Conjuros - oraciones, o la poética de Guayasamín," in *Guayasamín: Uma América Pintada*, ed. Adolfo Montejo Navas (Rio De Janeiro, RJ: Caixa Cultural Rio De Janeiro, 2006), 31.

[58] This work has also been referred to as "El paro."

the invoking of the viewer's empathy, as seen in *Los Trabajadores*. By presenting scenes rife with emotional energy, he created a space in which the viewer can understand, condemn, and take action against social injustices. Moreover, by drawing from Kingman's modern style, Guayasamín linked indigenous peoples to a modern reality that works to fill the holes in Mariátegui's pictorial indigenismo. Consequently, these works demonstrate the rise of indigenismo as a movement that criticized and built upon itself, all while placing Guayasamín at the center of such reconstruction.

La Huelga (Figure 7) depicts a gruesome scene of four anguished figures. In the forefront, a woman drags her son's limp body. To the right of her, a man lies dead in the street, and to the left of her, a man throws his arms up in pain. The juxtaposition between the woman's surprise and the man's limp and exaggerated body recalls the pieta, thus associating victims of the shooting with the suffering of Jesus. By using such a common and highly emotional iconography, Guayasamín encouraged the viewer to empathize with the main figure. He made them to think about the injustices brought upon him, and–once again–by drawing on the viewer's assumed religiosity, he encouraged the viewer to associate Jesus' innocence and sacrifice with that of the victim.

Within the work, the woman cowers from something that is unbeknownst to the viewer, something outside the limits of the canvas. Her balance is off, insinuating that she might fall to join the bodies on the street at any given moment. The man in her hands is slumped over, his head barely visible. His ribs pierce through his unclothed upper body, and he appears to be wearing only underwear, another reference to religious imagery as well as a testament to their vulnerability. His pale skin and limp body imply that he is dead.

The scene of the painting is purposefully ambiguous. A building behind the main figures is recognizable only by its undetailed doors and corner. Nevertheless, the clothing and style of the buildings indicate that this scene takes place in a modern setting. On the wall, someone has written the words "hoy paro," meaning "Today, I strike." Immediately below this phrase, a stain of blood creeps up the wall, most likely from an unknown victim. On the right side, a dead man lies in the street, surrounded by his own pool of blood. The whites of his eyes are one of the lightest points in the painting, forcing the viewer to look at his face and internalize his anguished look. His shirtless body straddles the sidewalk and the road, and his bare feet stretch out into the darkness of the street corner, disappearing in the process. This positioning of his body highlights how easily he has been discarded by others in the chaos of the strike; he is not safely placed in one spot but rather left straddling the barrier between the sidewalk and the street.

Behind him, two figures represented only by their lower bodies are dressed in uniform, indicating that they are most likely police officers. Their presence in the corner indicates that the scene shown is "the aftermath of a brutal shooting by the police into a group of strikers."[59] In contrast to all the other figures, the officers are not active. Instead, they are passively watching the chaos in front of them. Lastly, the man on the left side reaches his hands up, contorting his entire body in what the viewer can only assume to be extreme pain. His head is purposefully hidden, allowing anyone to put themselves in his place. Like the other wounded figures, he is both barefoot and shirtless, once again emphasizing his vulnerability.

This work contrasts the victims' pain with the police officers' passiveness. As a result, the work implies the complicity of the state in violence against indigenous peoples over the

[59] Jacqueline Barnitz and Patrick Frank, *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America,* 2nd ed. (Austin, TX: Univ Of Texas Press, 2015), 99.

years.[60] As seen with Kingman, Ecuadorian *indigenistas* were interested in class as it related to indigenous peoples. Similar to Mariátegui's support of Marxism as a means of liberating indigenous peoples, many *indigenistas* believed that the best way to support indigenous peoples was to uplift the working class. Of course, such an idea conflates indigenous peoples with workers and approaches the liberation of indigenous peoples as solely a class issue, not a multi-faceted issue.

Within this artwork, Guayasamín emphasized the dreary nature of the scene. The color palette is muted, resulting in an exaggerated difference between the dead and the living. The dead are a pale, blueish color—the same as the color of the building and the floor. This similarity implies the insignificance of the victims' death; it suggests that they are but elements of the environment now. The blood around the deceased and the living figures are the only warm colors in the composition, causing the viewer's eye to move from living to dead and back again. This tactic exaggerates the prevalence of death and pain the work, implying that they are part of this environment and, consequently, part of this modern reality.

Guayasamín also took extra care to elongate and distort different features of the living figures' bodies to emphasize their action within the narrative. The figure on the left's arm is absurdly long, a tool used to highlight the contortion in his arm. In this work, Guayasamín borrows Kingman's use of large hands and feet to denote the figures' roles as manual laborers, hence the man and woman's disproportionate hands. This exaggeration also stresses the figures' placements within the composition. As a result, the figures are made the focal point, making the viewer more likely to study them and internalize their pain.

[60] To the best of my knowledge, this work was not a response to a specific event but rather a testament to the general mistreatment of works in Ecuador at the time.

La Huelga is one of Guayasamín's only works to be so literal, as his later works would move towards being more abstract. The figures' emotions appear to be responding to specific violence against workers rather than to general oppressive forces. Nevertheless, as one of Guayasamín's earliest works, the main component is the use of emotion. Through the use of contrast and the treatment of figures, Guayasamín invites the viewer to empathize with the woman and her son, to feel their pain. Moreover, the depiction of passive police officers and suffering places the work as in opposition to the state, as opposed to opposition to general suffering. Lastly, the use of the words *huelga* [strike] and *paro* [strike, unemployment] emphasize that those in the right are the workers, leaving no room for the viewer to misconstrue the statement Guayasamín is trying to make about Ecuador's political situation.

In contrast to *indigenista* works from the 1920s, the figures in *La Huelga* are not depicted in identifiably indigenous clothing or a naturalistic setting. Instead, the figures wear generic clothing and appear to be in a city. As a result, nothing in this painting identifies these figures as indigenous peoples; instead, they are identifiable only as workers suffering from labor-related issues and state ambivalence. Once again, this change in clothing and setting works against stereotypical representations of indigenous peoples that associate indigenous peoples with rural land and traditional indigenous dress. By not playing into these stereotypes, Guayasamín avoids placing indigenous peoples in a distant past.

Despite this improvement from previous representations, *La Huelga*'s representation of indigenous peoples as poor, struggling laborers perpetuates negative stereotypes. By representing indigenous peoples as laborers, the work removes indigenous peoples from existing in other spaces. In other words, it suggests that indigenous peoples can only be lower class workers and inherently ties the liberation of indigenous peoples to the liberation of the class. As a result, it

avoids recognizing other factors—such as racial discrimination—that also oppress indigenous peoples and limits the scope of *indigenismo* overall.

Lastly, it is important to note that this work was understood as *indigenista* because of the context in which it was presented. Painted in 1940, *La Huelga* was exhibited in the May Salon of the Syndicate of Ecuadorian Writers and Artists.[61] Founded in 1937, the Syndicate was founded by artists and writers, such as Kingman, Carrión, Jorge Icaza, and Diógenes Paredes.[62] The Syndicate's primary purpose was to align artists, writers, and other intellectuals with the working class. In Eduardo Kingman's words, as quoted and translated by Michele Greet, members of the Syndicate saw themselves as "workers within the cultural arena."[63] They considered themselves to be members of the avant-garde, fighting for social change through their cultural practices.

Although the Syndicate and *indigenista* artists explored *indigenismo* throughout the 1930s, *indigenismo* as a movement was not officially launched until 1930 when writers Jorge Reyes, José Alfredo Llerena, and Alfredo Chávez founded the Salon.[64] This exhibition was the first non-government sponsored annual art exhibition, a fact that essentially placed the Salón in opposition to the conservatism of government-controlled art.[65] Given the context of the Salon as the intersection of art, culture, and the working class, *La Huelga*'s straightforward portrayal of the oppression of lower class workers by the state fits in perfectly.

In 1941, Guayasamín exhibited two works, *El Entierro* and *El Silencio*, in his one-person show at Caspicara Gallery, a private space owned by Kingman (Figure 8).[66] *El Silencio* marked Guayasamín's shift towards more generalized figures. Within this work, three generalized

[61] "Salón de Mayo del Sindicato de Escritores y Artistas Ecuatorianas," Barnitz, *Twentieth Century Art of Latin America*, 97.
[62] Greet, "Painting the Indian Nation," 211.
[63] Ibid., 218.
[64] Barnitz, 97.
[65] Greet, "Painting the Indian Nation," 249.
[66] I have not been able to find an image of *El Entierro*.

figures stare into the distance with distressed expressions. Critics acclaimed this move towards more symbolic figures. In particular, critic José Alfredo Llerena,[67] affectionately described Guayasamín's work at the show as "symbols of human suffering."[68] Given Llerena's position as part of the Syndicate as well as his role as a professor at the Escuela de Bellas Artes,[69] this comment indicates that the avant-garde and intellectual scene in Ecuador favored a more generalized representation of indigenous peoples. To them, symbolic representation expanded the suffering of indigenous peoples to a more universal context.

Painted nearly two years after *La Huelga*, *Los Trabajadores* solidifies Guayasamín's transition to representing symbolic figures (Figure 9). Unlike *La Huelga*, *Los Trabajadores* has no narrative. The work investigates the workers as symbols, not as people experiencing real life obstacles. Moreover, *Los Trabajadores* also demonstrates Guayasamín's budding interest in avant-garde techniques, as he experiments with impasto and flattened space.

On the website for the Fundación Guayasamín, a foundation created by Guayasamín to promote his artwork and philosophy, this painting is reproduced with the following statement:

> The painting portrays a group of people returning from a long day of working the land, barefoot, with just the necessary tools, demonstrating the precarious conditions in which the majority of peasants worked at that time, and which continue to repeat in our time. However, one can also perceive in them the soundness and strength of the indigenous race.[70]

The workers depicted are all dressed modestly. Five men carry tools, and the woman on the far right carries an empty bowl in her hand. A flat silhouette of mountains places this scene in a rural

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[67] José Alfredo Llerena collaborated with the Syndicate of Ecuadorian Writers and Artists the following year to write *La pintura ecuatoriana del siglo XX*. Within this book, he criticized Eduardo Kingman's work heavily, particularly for its Marxist undertones and tendency to depict the Indian worker.

[68] Greet, *Beyond National Identity,* 153.

[69] Gonzalo Ramón Lara, *Quien Es Guayasamín* (Quito: Autor, 1999), 42.

[70] "Retrata un grupo de personas que regresan de un largo día de trabajar la tierra, descalzos, con apenas las herramientas necesarias, demostrando las condiciones precarias en la que la mayoría de campesinos trabajaban en esa época, y que se sigue repitiendo en nuestro tiempo. Sin embargo, también se puede percibir en ellos la solidez y fortaleza de la raza indígena." Fundación Guayasamín, "Los Trabajadores, 1942," Fundación Guayasamín, accessed December 10, 2018, http://www.capilladelhombre.com/index.php/obra/primera-epoca/59-los-trabajadores-1942.

setting. Just as he does in *La Huelga*, Guayasamín limits his color palette to only muted, earthy tones, adding a somber glaze. He uses almost the same hue for the figures' skin tones as he does for the ground to create an association between the workers and their environment, to imply that the workers are inherently tied to their environment and the struggles that accompany it.

Perhaps the most captivating part of the painting, all the figures—including the donkey—have hauntingly blacked-out eyes. To emphasize this choice, all parts of the eyes are irregularly shaped and enlarged, even the tear ducts. This mix of being drawn to look at the figures' eyes yet having them be completely black and undecipherable is jarring; it makes the figures completely devoid of expression. Their eyes stare blankly at the viewer, and Guayasamín's use of exaggeration forces the viewer to stare back at them.

By not being able to see the figures' eyes, the viewer is forced to look at the workers' facial expressions, but those are blank too. If anything, their mouths appear to be slightly frowning, but given Guayasamín's tendency to overstate elements, such a conclusion seems speculative. Instead, the viewer must confront the fact that all the figures face forward, staring at them with no expression and, most importantly, no agency. The work is nearly life-size, making all visual elements significantly more intimidating.

Arranged in the center, Guayasamín presents the figures as monolithic. Their bodies take up almost the entirety of the canvas, overshadowing the already faint mountains in the background. The viewer's focus is entirely on them. In art historian Michele Greet's words, they form a "*tableau vivant* of sorts."[71] Their bodies are exaggerated, even more so than the bodies in *La Huelga*. Their feet are absurdly huge, and they are so muscular that their veins pop out. Here we once again see Guayasamín's use of Kingman's iconography to highlight the figures'

[71] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 155.

strength and position as manual laborers. In effect, the figures become symbolic rather than specific, banded together through their assumed shared experience.

The lack of action in this work recalls the static representation of indigenous workers from the 1920s, particularly Sabogal's *El Sembrador* (Figure 4). *Los Trabajadores* and Sabogal's *El Sembrador* can be compared in the sense that they both depict figures at work. While Sabogal's work idealizes an unrealistic person, Guayasamín's work depicts workers in hope that the viewer can empathize with them. In *El Sembrador*, Sabogal's figure is meant to invoke the idea of an isolated, pre-colonial indigenous person, not a modern one. Guayasamín's figures, on the other hand, are symbolic, but they do not exist in a distant past. Although the work does not provide details strong enough to argue when and where they exist, they could just as easily be from the 1940s as they could be from the twenty-first century. This choice of abstraction is not exoticization but rather a tactic to make indigenous peoples' strife more relatable to the non-indigenous viewer.

Similar to Sabogal, Guayasamín uses a nondescript setting to emphasize the figures. In an interesting contrast to Sabogal, Guayasamín's figures cannot be definitively identified as indigenous peoples; we can only conclude that they are workers. Thus, the focus is not placed on them as indigenous peoples but on them as modern laborers, a fact that the title, the size of their hands and feet, and their tools even further emphasize.

Lastly, the lack of expression in *Los Trabajadores* is hyperbolical. It exaggerates the workers' lack of agency and prompts the viewer to search for expression. In Sabogal's work, the lack of expression was not highlighted but rather an offshoot of other factors he chose to emphasize instead. In *Los Trabajadores*, Guayasamín's use of generalization, coupled with his choice to depict an exaggerated lack of expression, causes the viewer to have a more specific

reaction, to think more critically about injustices to workers that might hit closer to home. Even more so, Guayasamín invites the viewer to think about how the workers would express themselves, something that could lead to the viewer's ability to connect with oppressed groups.

Nonetheless, as seen with *La Huelga*, *Los Trabajadores* once again perpetuates the idea of indigenous peoples as only workers. By representing these figures as symbols of indigenous workers, *Los Trabajadores* applies this stereotype to the general indigenous population. Additionally, this work ties the workers to their land. By representing a vague mountainscape in the background, Guayasamín insinuates that indigenous peoples exist only in rural, mountain areas, another harmful stereotype.

Another consequence of Guayasamín's focus on the symbolic rather than the literal is the subsequent reduction of political overtness. By turning his figures into symbols, Guayasamín moves away from making specific political statements and more towards representing generalized suffering. In *Los Trabajadores*, Guayasamín provides a space that allows the viewer to reflect on the current situation of indigenous peoples, but in *La Huelga*, Guayasamín distinctly criticizes labor injustices and the state's complicity. In other words, *La Huelga* attaches itself to a more tangible and more specific injustice, whereas *Los Trabajadores* is so generalized that it does not condemn anything specific. This lack of political specificity is especially significant as it was a key aspect of Mariátegui's *indigenismo*. As explored in the previous chapter, Mariátegui believed that *indigenistas* should be overt Marxists, and although Guayasamín identified as left-leaning, such political identification faded from manifesting itself in his more allegorical works.

Once again, the intellectual community praised Guayasamín's shift towards the symbolic. Ecuadorian journalist Raul Andrade, a founding member of the Syndicate, commented on Guayasamín's shift away from narrative, stating:

> [*Los trabajadores*] refers to the Indians of our country without presenting them in a dramatic, sorrowful scene as has become a sort of 'obligation' until today… [Guayasamín is] a painter who, at this juncture, wants to avoid subjecting us to the accusing and dejected presence of the Ecuadorian Indian in the painting he exhibits….[72]

This excerpt reflects how *indigenismo* praised such generalization, seeing it as not "dramatic" or "sorrowful" but as empowering. The quote implies that Guayasamín's representation of indigenous figures is positive, most likely due to both the use of emotion and modernity. Nonetheless, as has already been discussed, these representations are still flawed. Consequently, this quote represents an interesting moment in which the negative aspects of *Los Trabajadores* are ignored, and instead, the positive aspects are presented as groundbreaking. As a result, we can begin to see how *indigenismo* moved past its problematic past errors only to make new ones, ones that once again limited its potential to uplift indigenous peoples.

Whereas the previous two paintings were responses to generalized suffering and oppression in Ecuador, *Niños Muertos* is a response to a specific event (Figure 10). In 1932, a military coup overthrew President Isidro Ayora and replaced him with President Neptalí Bonifaz. As a result, La Guerra de los Cuatro Días [The Four Day War] plagued Quito as supporters of either president fought against one another.[73] After the conflict, Guayasamín, who was thirteen at the time, walked around the city to see the aftermath of the conflict. There he found a large pile of decomposing bodies. Among these bodies was his childhood friend, Manjarrés, with four holes in his head.[74] This experience solidified Guayasamín's hatred of violence in the years to come.

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[72] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 155, quoting Andrade in "Acto inaugural de la exposición de Oswaldo Guayasamín," *El día*, April 25, 1942, Archivo de la Fundación Guayasamín, clipping file.

[73] "Guerra Del Cuatro Días - Historia Del Ecuador," Enciclopedia Del Ecuador, May 16, 2017, , accessed May 01, 2019, http://www.enciclopediadelecuador.com/historia-del-ecuador/guerra-del-cuatro-dias/.

[74] Ramón Lara, 29-30.

Even though this work is based on a specific event, the figures are not specific at all. Instead, they are more generic than even *Los Trabajadores*, lacking any specific markers or distinguishable features. Moreover, although Guayasamín uses a thick outline to differentiate figures from their environment, he stylistically links the figures and their environment by using the same texture on both.[75] This association with the environment once again calls to mind the harmful stereotype to define indigenous peoples by their socio-political situation, and in this case especially, dehumanized them.

This work demonstrates how despite the specificity in inspiration, Guayasamín continued to be symbolic. In this work, the viewer is confronted with dead bodies, and as described above, this confrontation is important and does have positive impacts. However, in the words of Ecuadorian intellectual Jorge Enrique Adoum, this painting "represents reality without explaining it."[76] Interestingly enough, as Adoum points out, we know that these children were victims of a crime, that they were killed by someone rather than dying of natural causes. Without explanation though, the viewer is left unsure of who is to blame. Instead, they are only able to feel for general suffering, limiting the political potential of the work. As a result, this work once again shows how Guayasamín's work's potential is limited by his use of the symbolic and avoidance of narrative.

Over the next few years, Guayasamín would go on to travel to the U.S. and throughout Latin America, and work on his first series, *Huacayñán*. In this series, Guayasamín's work becomes more abstract, and for reasons to be further explored in the next chapter, less politically radical. As Guayasamín enhanced his use of generalization and abstraction in this series, issues associated with lack of specificity were magnified. Moreover, as the Ecuadorian government

[75] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 155.

[76] Jorge Enrique Adoum, Guayasamín: El Hombre, La Obra, La Crítica (Nurnberg, A.F.: DA Verlag Des Andere, 1998), 125.

began to utilize *indigenismo* as a national policy, Guayasamín's work became less avant-garde in content as it reflected governmental perceptions of indigenous peoples.

CHAPTER THREE: *Huacayñán* and Emerging Nationalism

I argue that Oswaldo Guayasamín's first series, *Huacayñán* (1952-1953),[77] demonstrates the moment in which Ecuadorian *indigenismo* becomes less radical. As *indigenismo* moved from existing in the avant-garde to being a nationally sponsored movement, artistic representations of indigenous peoples become more generalized. This use of generalization marked a shift towards using more universal attributes rather than specific details, making the works more applicable to generic feelings but less so to specific political moments and actions. Moreover, *Huacayñán*'s anti-Blackness exemplifies the continuation of issues with Mariátegui's *indigenismo*, a further testament to this reactionary moment in Guayasamín's career.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of both Ecuador's political situation and Guayasamín's career in the 1940s. Then, I compare Mariátegui's discussion of different racial groups to Guayasamín's representation and description of them in *Huacayñán*, with a focus on both figures' anti-Blackness. To exemplify this point, I discuss two of Guayasamín's paintings from *Huacayñán*: *Nina Negra* [Black Girl] (1948) and *La Marimba* [The Marimba] (1951). Lastly, I examine the reactionary depiction of indigenous peoples in *Huacayñán*, both through a formal analysis of *Cartuchos* [Calla Lilies] (n.d.) and the separation of indigenous peoples from other racial groups in *Huacayñán* overall.

The mid-1940s marked a significant shift in Ecuadorian *indigenismo*. The election and exile of President Carlos Alberto Arroyo del Río, Ecuador's disastrous war with Peru, and the backdrop of World War II changed the political climate of the Andean region. In response to national distress, Benjamín Carrión wrote public letters to the government that urged

[77] These are the dates cited by Carlos A. Jáuregui in his article "*Huacayñán* (1952-1953) and the biopolitics of in(ex)clusion. However, Guayasamín started working on *Huacayñán* as early as during his trip throughout Latin America in the mid-1940s. The book *Of Rage and Redemption* states that Guayasamín started working on works for the series as early as 1946.

Ecuadorians to turn to cultural projects for a renewed sense of national pride. Consequently, Carrión pushed the Ecuadorian government to establish the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana (CCE) in 1944.[78]

Following Carrión's personal philosophy, the CCE embraced *indigenismo* as a means of defining and celebrating Ecuadorian national identity.[79] As the CCE gained traction, *indigenismo* fell out of favor with the avant-garde, with many criticizing *indigenismo* for its appropriation of indigenous peoples' situations as a means of propaganda.[80] Nevertheless, as scholar Michele Greet points out, *indigenismo* remained prominent into the 1950s due to its ability to serve the government's interests. In response to the government's interest in *indigenismo* and its subsequent shift away from avant-garde circles, many artists, including Guayasamín, sought to universalize their art and distance themselves from the *indigenista* label.[81]

Even years later, Guayasamín continued to emphasize the universal nature of his work. In an interview with the artist, Guayasamín dismissed the viewer's tendency to make political connections to his work, stating: "Yes, but this has nothing to do with my painting. In my painting the political thing, any form of the political type, is circumstantial. It is something that is happening now and tomorrow disappears.[82] Guayasamín later elaborated on this statement, claiming he is "a man of the left but [has] never belonged to a political party. Instead, [he has] a

[78] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 176.

[79] Ibid.

[80] For example, José Alfredo Llerena wrote: "[Indigenistas] made us believe that the air the phantoms of our imagination breathe must be that of rebellion, of agitated masses, of social struggles… The Indian has become a guinea pig for everyone who takes up painting." Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 177, quoting José Alfredo Llerena, "Quito Salón Nacional de artes plásticas," *Letras del Ecuador* 9:85 (July-August 1953): 8.

[81] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 177.

[82] "Si, pero eso no tuvo nada que ver con mi pintura. En mi pintura la cosa política, cualquier forma de tipo político, es circunstancial. Es una cosa que está pasando ahorita y que mañana desaparece." Montejo Navas, *Guayasamín: Uma América Pintada*, 54.

humanist-like position rather than a determined ideology—it is a feeling."[83] In short, Guayasamín consistently upheld his commitment to universalism, even to the point of denying particular political interpretations of his work.

Within these quotes, Guayasamín suggests that representing a specific political ideology or event detracts from the symbolic nature of his work. To him, specificity limits the work to a moment, making it less applicable to future instances of oppression. Following this logic, we can assume that Guayasamín considered *Los Trabajadores*' use of generalization to be more powerful than *La Huelga*'s use of narrative. However, as seen in Chapter Two, the use of symbolic figures does not provide enough context to improve the situation of those depicted. Guayasamín's works are apolitical in the sense that they are not targeted. Unlike Mariátegui's pictorial *indigenismo*, there is no call for a Marxist revolution or the demise of the bourgeois. Instead, the works criticize indefinite injustice. Once again, this lack of political specificity contradicted Mariátegui's *indigenismo* and helped Guayasamín further distance himself from the movement.

Despite his efforts to disassociate himself from *indigenismo*, Guayasamín maintained a close relationship with Carrión during this time, even calling him his "spiritual father" in a letter from 1957.[84] In 1951, the CCE offered Guayasamín financial assistance with his first series, *Huacayñán*, thus aligning the series with the government's interpretation of *indigenismo*.[85] Before discussing this project, it is important to briefly look at Guayasamín's career in the 1940s.

In 1942, Nelson Rockefeller saw and bought several of Guayasamín's paintings. According to Michele Greet, these paintings were all more in line with Guayasamín's budding

[83] "Soy un hombre de izquierda pero jamás he pertenecido a ningún partido político. Más bien tengo una posición de tipo humanista que una ideología determinada, es un sentimiento." Ibid.

[84] Jáuregui, 39.

[85] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 178.

interest in universalism and lacked narrative.[86] The following year, Rockefeller recommended Guayasamín for a travel grant to visit various U.S. art institutions.[87] This financial support from Rockefeller most likely solidified Guayasamín's then-recent shift towards more symbolic figures as well as his affiliation with universalism. More importantly, while in the U.S., Guayasamín came into contact with a variety of artworks that would serve as a source for him throughout the rest of his career.[88] Some examples of such are works by El Greco, Francisco Goya,[89] and Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), which had just arrived at the Museum of Modern Art.[90] After visiting the U.S., Guayasamín was able to travel to Mexico, where he met and learned from Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco.[91]

Following his trip to the U.S., Guayasamín traveled around Latin America, collecting notes and making sketches that would serve as sources for his series *Huacayñán*.[92] For Guayasamín, interviewing and traveling were major components of his artistic process. Contemporaneously, Carrión continued to push the use of *indigenismo* as a means of defining Ecuadorian nationalism through the CCE. As stated earlier, Carrión took particular interest in culture as it related to nationalism. He understood art and other creative fields as a way to solidify his version of *indigenismo*, much like Mariátegui did before him. As a result, Carrión

[86] Ibid., 166.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Carlos A. Jáuregui and Edward F. Fischer. "Of Rage and Redemption. Oswaldo Guayasamín (1919-1999)." in *Of Rage and Redemption: The Art of Oswaldo Guayasamín*, ed. Joseph S. Mella, Carlos A. Jáuregui, and Edward F. Fischer (Nashville, Tennessee (USA): University Fine Arts Gallery, 2008), 23.
[89] The Fundación Guayasamín, which showcases Guayasamín's personal collection, had various prints by Goya and an artwork by Picasso on display when I visited there in March 2019.
[90] Pablo Cuvi, *Guayasamín: El Poder De La Pintura* (Quito: Santillana, 2012), 14.
[91] Ibid. Mexican muralists, such as Rivera, were also featured in *Amauta*. Although out of the scope of this thesis, there is definitely a comparison to be made between Andean *indigenismo* and Mexican *indigenismo*.
[92] "Realiza un viaje entre 1944 y 1945 desde México hasta la Patagonia en el que hace apuntes y dibujos de la que será su primera serie de 103 cuadros, denominada *Huacayñán*…." "Breve Perfil Biográfico," in *Guayasamín: Uma América Pintada*, ed. Adolfo Montejo Navas (Rio De Janeiro, RJ: Caixa Cultural Rio De Janeiro, 2006), 116.

promoted radio broadcasting, artisanal crafts, and fine art.[93] Carrión saw Guayasamín's work as an example of his vision for Ecuadorian nationalism and invited him to show work at the CCE in 1945 and 1948, paint a mural in the main gallery in 1949, and eventually work under commission for his series *Huacayñán* in 1951.[94] Thus, it is impossible to separate Guayasamín's first series from Carrión's philosophy.

Huacayñán is comprised of 101 paintings and a movable mural. The series is subdivided into three themes: indigenous peoples, mestizxs, and afrolatinx peoples. These themes are meant to represent the three demographic groups of Ecuador. Each theme uses specific stylistic elements to help categorize it, such as landscape, color selection, and treatment of form.[95] According to Guayasamín, these themes represent the suffering that each of these different groups endure, a fact that was further emphasized by the title, which translated to "The Ways of Tears" in Quichua.[96] Guayasamín's decision to include all three of these groups as survivors of suffering stands in direct contrast to Mariátegui's *indigenismo*. In Mariátegui's version of *indigenismo*, he believed that social justice work in Andean regions should focus solely on indigenous peoples.

For example, in his "Literature on Trial" essay, Mariátegui reiterates the importance of indigenous peoples at the cost of afrolatinx identities.[97] He states:

> In making reparation to the autochthonous race, it is necessary to separate the Indian from the Negro, mulatto, and *zambo*, who represent colonial elements in our past… Because he has never been able to acclimatize himself physically or spiritually to the sierra, the Negro has always viewed it with distrust and hostility. When he has mixed

[93] Jáuregui, 39.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Greet, *Beyond National Identity*, 178.
[96] Jáuregui, 35.
[97] In the following quote, Mariátegui uses the terms "Negro, mulatto, and *zambo.*" These terms refer to *castas* [castes] of different racial identities. According to these *castas*, a person of African descent belongs to the "Negro" caste. A person who is of white and African descent belongs to the "mulatto" caste, and a person of indigenous and African descent belongs to the "*zambo*" caste. Today, these terms are considered offensive as they restrict identities and were a means of oppressing non-white people in colonial Latin America.

> with the Indian, he has corrupted him with his false servility and exhibitionist and morbid psychology.[98]

In this quote, Mariátegui clarifies that he sees indigenous peoples and Black people as separate, even if someone is of afrolatinx and indigenous heritage. This statement is problematic as it generalizes Black identities, just as Mariátegui generalized indigenous identities. Moreover, Mariátegui classifies racial identity as binary: indigenous-identifying or not. In doing so, Mariátegui not only fails to be intersectional[99] but also adds to anti-Black rhetoric in Latin America that viewed afrolatinx peoples as barriers to social development.[100]

In the following paragraph, Mariátegui acknowledges that afrolatinx peoples suffer from oppressive forces, much like indigenous peoples, while continuing to project anti-Black stereotypes:

> Since emancipation, the Negro has become addicted to his status of liberated slave. Colonial society turned the Negro into a domestic servant, very seldom into an artisan or worker, and it absorbed and assimilated him until it became intoxicated by his hot, tropical blood. The Negro was as accessible and domesticated as the Indian was impenetrable and remote. Thus the very origin of slave importation created a subordination from which the Negro and mulatto can be redeemed only through a social and economic revolution that will turn them into workers and thereby gradually extirpate their slave mentality… Only socialism can awaken in [the mulatto] a class consciousness that will lead him to a definitive rupture with the last remnants of his colonial spirit.[101]

Despite acknowledging the oppression of Black communities, Mariátegui continues to project harmful stereotypes onto the afrolatinx population. In the statement "The Negro was as accessible and domesticated as the Indian was impenetrable and remote," Mariátegui compares the two identities against one another, revealing his bias for the nonexistent "untouched" and

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[98] Ibid., 273.

[99] I refer to intersectionality as the understanding of overlapping identities. Intersectionality includes race, class, gender, sexual orientation, accessibility, and many other categorizations; intersectionality refers to the need to understand marginalized identities as interconnected, not singular, in order to successfully unpack social injustice.

[100] Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (Chicago, IL: Pluto Press, 1997), 48.

[101] Ibid.

"pre-colonial" indigenous person. This comparison rejects the understanding of oppression as multiplicitous and postcolonial while still assigning stereotypical attributes to both groups.

For this reason, Guayasamín's interest in the struggles of indigenous peoples and afrolatinx peoples alike demonstrates that he moved beyond Mariátegui's problematic neglection of other social groups. In *Huacayñán*, Guayasamín attempted to "portray a demographic-racial composition of the country, and in doing so, tried to create a broad, diversified, but fixed idea of the national."[102] In other words, Guayasamín applied his own system of taxonomy onto Ecuadorian demographic groups and presented it as a true and undeniable understanding of the nation.

Guayasamín describes his intentions with the series in the following excerpt:

> Our continent's power, and especially that of Ecuador, comes from the Indian, who continues to be the cement, the structure of our nationality. The Indian is the solid, the serene, the static, the stable; hence to express that human condition, I have reverted to a flat conception of the picture because this is the authentic form of artistic expression that the Indian created. The Indian theme was painted with earth tones and like the other themes, I eliminate the folkloric, the anecdotal, to concentrate essentially on human content.[103]

Within this quote, we can begin to see similarities between the problem with Mariátegui's *indigenismo* and Guayasamín's implementation of it.

First, Guayasamín states that indigenous peoples are the "structure of [Ecuadorian] nationality." As seen with Mariátegui's statements, this idea overprioritizes indigenous peoples at the expense of other marginalized groups, particularly afrolatinx groups. Moreover, the emphasis of indigenous peoples as "serene," "static," and "stable" recalls Moro's criticisms of

[102] "Guayasamín estaba retratando una composición demográfico-racial del país, y al hacerlo, intentaba crear una idea amplia, diversificada, pero fija de lo nacional." Ordóñez Charpentier, 54.

[103] Greet, "Painting the Indian Nation," 306 quoting and translating Guayasamín in "La historia del Ecuador es un camino de llanto, *El Sol* Nov. 17, 1952, Archivo de la Fundación Guayasamín, clippings file.

Mariátegui's and Sabogal's works. In this sense, Guayasamín contradicts the powerful aspects of his earlier works and reverts to an exoticized depiction of indigenous peoples in a distant past.

With respect to his representation of mestizx people, Guayasamín states the following:

> In reference to the Mestizo theme I must explain that the Mestizo is a human group in formation, with neither a strong cultural nor a strong political trajectory, without a robust and definitive structure. The Mestizo is a man formed from a mixture of the great passions of the Spanish spirit and the serenity of the Indian temperament. This characteristic of the Mestizo corresponds exactly to the essence of the baroque and the expressionist. Since the baroque is a twisted, broken style, it is a decomposition of form and color; and expressionism is introverted sensation, from the same origin as the baroque, it is made up of forms and sensations. In the creation of these paintings that deal with the Mestizo theme I employed the color gray, between black and white, as a range of color that expresses this non-conforming, non-resolute condition of the Mestizo.[104]

This interpretation of *mestizaje* differs from that of Mariátegui's. For Mariátegui, *mestizaje* did not represent mixed identity as much as it was a manifestation of colonization. Mariátegui believed that despite being of mixed ancestry, mestizxs were European. To further his point, he used Garcilaso de la Vega, "the first mestizo," as an example, stating that he was "the first Peruvian, if by 'Peruvianness' we mean a social formation determined by the Spanish conquest and colonization."[105] Although somewhat lacking in nuance, Mariátegui's criticized *mestizaje* in order to make a space for indigenous peoples.

Throughout the twentieth century, *mestizaje* was used by mestizx elites to claim indigenous identity and use *indigenismo* as national policy. This tactic usually defined mestizxs in opposition to indigenous and Black identities, while still creating a path for mestizxs to use indigenous heritage to their advantage. Consequently, *mestizaje* was a dangerous tool for oppressing indigenous and afrolatinx peoples by imposing a cultural identity upon the nation.[106] Given the history of *mestizaje* as an oppressive force, Guayasamín's inclusion of it is a definitive

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[104] Greet, "Painting the Indian Nation," 306 quoting and translating Guayasamín in "La historia del Ecuador es un camino de llanto, *El Sol* Nov. 17, 1952, Archivo de la Fundación Guayasamín, clippings file.

[105] Mariátegui, 189.

[106] Wade, 65.

diversion from Mariátegui. Although we will never be able to know exactly why Guayasamín chose to include a mestizx theme, the Ecuadorian government's role in commissioning *Huacayñán* could be a possible explanation, particularly given the Ecuadorian government's hand in *indigenismo* at that moment.[107]

Guayasamín's choice to separate mestizxs and indigenous peoples somewhat thwarts mestizx claim to indigenous heritage. Nevertheless, Guayasamín did express his support of *mestizaje*, stating:

> In the mountains, the Indians and Whites predominate, and on the coast, the Indians or the Blacks, or the Blacks and the Whites; however, they are all already mixed. This is stupendous. I fervently believe in *mestizaje*. It is the power of America.[108,109]

The last two sentences of this quote are direct in their support of *mestizaje*, and in *Huacayñán* itself, Guayasamín centered *mestizaje* as the norm and categorizes indigenous and Black identity as Other.[110] As a result, his representations of indigenous and afrolatinx peoples become less radical, even to the point of perpetuating negative stereotypes.

Lastly, Guayasamín's representation of Black Ecuadorians was particularly generalized and problematic. In the following statement, he describes his vision for the Black theme in *Huacayñán*:

> Finally, for the Black theme I resorted to abstract painting, because Blacks are a human group made from primitive essences where tradition has been maintained through their music and their poetry and the abstract in essence is primitive form, analyzed mathematically in a cold conscious and cerebral way; therefore abstraction would be the pictorial form most adequate to express the Black spirit full of legends, primitives,

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[107] The essay "Of Rage and Redemption" elaborates on Guayasamín's interest in *mestizaje*. Jáuregui and Fischer suggest that Guayasamín chose to fragment these groups to demystify the idea of the mestizx nation and portray how different groups suffered in different ways. Jáuregui and Fischer, 28.

[108] Wade, 44.

[109] According to page 48 of Jáuregui's article, Guayasamín's later works showed a more complicated relationship with *mestizaje*, and "throughout his life [Guayasamín] maintained diverse and ambivalent positions about the Mestizo, which he understood to be a product of colonial violence and an agent of the reproduction of oppression."

[110] Ibid., 46.

> because there are no subtle transitions and everything is round, brilliant, and definitive. In these paintings yellows, whites, reds, greens, and pure blacks dominate.[111]

Guayasamín's negative representation of Black Ecuadorians can also be attributed to Mariátegui's blatant racism described above. Taking it even one step further, Guayasamín justified his visual representation of negative, anti-Black stereotypes on the idea that Black people have a "primitive essence." Following a similar string of offensiveness, Guayasamín portrayed Black Ecuadorians in the series as "sensual beings, lovers of rhythm, music, bodies, dances."[112] These stereotypes add onto the idea of primitiveness as they objectify Black bodies. In particular, the hypersexualization of Black female bodies is a stereotype, often referred to as the "Jezebel," that was used to legitimize sexual violence against Black women.[113]

This portrayal of afrolatinx peoples is harmful, to say the least. By associating afrolatinx people with the jungle, Guayasamín not only contributed to the "primitive" stereotype, but he also separated afrolatinx people from being depicted in a modern space. As seen repeatedly throughout this thesis, the use of modernity was important for dismantling social injustices. Without modernity, the figure depicted is transported to a false time and location, one which prohibits the viewer from beginning to accurately understand the figures' situation. Lastly, it is important to reiterate that Guayasamín's earlier works were so compelling due to his use of modernity, and by removing such a setting from Black bodies, he implied that Black Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples are at odds with one another.

Niña Negra is but one of many examples of Guayasamín's negative portrayal of afrolatinx peoples (Figure 11). In this work, a Black girl sits cross-legged. She is completely

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[111] Greet, "Painting the Indian Nation," 306 quoting and translating Guayasamín in "La historia del Ecuador es un camino de llanto, *El Sol* Nov. 17, 1952, Archivo de la Fundación Guayasamín, clippings file.

[112] "Guayasamín elige retratarlos como seres sexuados, sensuales, amantes del ritmo, la música, los cuerpos, los bailes." Ibid., 90.

[113] "The Jezebel Stereotype," The Jezebel Stereotype - Anti-black Imagery - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University, accessed April 25, 2019, https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/jezebel/index.htm.

nude, and her hands just barely cover her genitals. Her body is minimized to almost nothing but an outline, and the only small details about her are her facial features, her clavicle, her breasts, and her belly button. She looks into the distance, her eyes averted from the viewer. Behind her is a rectangle, filled with bright colors and swirling patterns—it may be a window or a painting. Either way, the scene is ambiguous.

Unlike in his previous representations of indigenous peoples, this scene invokes no emotion. Similar to *Los Trabajadores*, the girl's face lacks emotion, but, in this case, she looks away from the viewer rather than confronting them. If anything, her face may be a bit sad, but the lack of clues in the painting make such a conclusion indiscernible. The only aspect of her face that is highlighted are her lips, not her expression. Stylistically, this work is intriguing. The use of contrast and lack of shade amplify the girl's body. Unfortunately, her body is sexualized as a result. Despite being a child, her breasts are overstated, and if one did not know from the title, she could be mistaken for a mature woman.

La Marimba echoes similar issues of stereotyping (Figure 12). Starting with its title, this work associates afrolatinx peoples with music, a common exoticization of Black culture. The work itself is comprised of multiple faces that, on first glance, resemble a Cubist work. However, this work does not show several perspectives of the same scene but rather different reactions from separate people. Nude, Black, female bodies fill the spaces between the faces, accompanied by some contorted limbs, complete with "wide hips, large breasts, open genitals, sinuous lines and extreme sensuality."[114] Contrary to the title, no marimbas are present in the work; instead, a disembodied hand plays a drum in the lower right corner.[115]

[114] "Los cuerpos de las mujeres muestran caderas anchas, senos grandes, genitales abiertos, líneas sinuosas y extrema sensualidad." Ibid, 91.

[115] Ibid.

Fragmenting the Black female body is common in racist depictions of Black women. Fragmentation is problematic because it objectifies and sexualizes parts of the body. Through fragmentation, the Black body is appropriated, sexualized, and reconfigured to fit the colonial male gaze, all while removing the Black woman's autonomy over her own body. Moreover, it is worth noting that although Guayasamín experimented with fragmentation and abstraction, *La Marimba* is the only work in *Huacayñán* to carry out fragmentation to this extent. In other words, works in the indigenous and mestizx theme are just as stylistically ambitious while not being comprised of various body parts.[116]

Lastly, as Angélica Ordóñez Charpentier points out:

> In *Marimba*, you do not see any naked men, only their faces, where their fleshy lips and eyes stand out, and where the iris and cornea occupy a small place compared to the white background of the visual apparatus. Already, Gilman (1985) has shown how it was believed that those who had a white segment exposed with the eye open, were inclined to lust and crime. This was thought of Blacks, and Guayasamín used this pictoric resource as representative.[117]

In this excerpt, Ordóñez Charpentier observes that Guayasamín actively drew from harmful stereotypes of Black people and added it to his visual iconography. As a result, we can conclude that Guayasamín's anti-Blackness was well-informed. Additionally, while not part of this series, it is worth noting that Guayasamín chose to depict the figures in *Los Trabajadores* with black eyes. This leads me to my next point: Guayasamín's representation of afrolatinx peoples lacks the emotional energy that his previous works have. In the process of sexualizing and objectifying the Black body, Guayasamín neglected to depict strong emotion, reducing the viewer's ability to engage with the painting. In *La Niña Negra*, no such emotion is present; in *La Marimba*,

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[116] This is my own conclusion drawn from an overview of *Huacayñán* seen at the Fundación Guayasamín.

[117] "Marimba no se ven hombres desnudos, solo sus rostros, donde resaltan los labios carnosos y ojos en donde el iris y la córnea ocupan un pequeño lugar en comparación con el fondo blanco del aparato visual. Ya Gilman (1985) ha mostrado como se creía que quienes tenían un segmento blanco al descubierto con el ojo abierto, estaban inclinados a la lascivia y al crimen. Así se pensaba de los negros, y ese recurso pictórico lo toma Guayasamín como representativo." Ibid., 92.

although each face appears be insinuating some sort of emotion, the quantity and fragmentation of these faces limits any expressional impact.

Likewise, Guayasamín's images in the indigenous theme also fail to incite an emotional response from the viewer. For example, the painting *Cartuchos* depicts a portrait of a young, indigenous woman in front of an array of flowers (Figure 13). Her face is solemn, and her eyes are closed. Unlike the representations of indigenous peoples discussed in Chapter Two, this painting lacks a confrontational edge. In it, Guayasamín pushed his use of generalization to an extreme, and the viewer is left with a representation of a generic woman in front of an ambiguous scene. There is no setting, and there is no narrative. Most importantly, there is nothing jarring about the portrait. There are no dead bodies, no black eyes staring out at the viewer. Instead, there is a static image of a woman without emotion.

This image parallels the categorical representations of indigenous peoples from the twentieth century. The only difference between those works and Guayasamín's is that Guayasamín's work is stylistically intriguing. Instead of being naturalistic, Guayasamín inserts a playful use of flat forms and thick impasto. This work resembles Sabogal's *India del Collao* in particular (Figure 3), but even Sabogal's painting is more confrontation. The woman in Sabogal's portrait stares at the viewer, insinuating a sense of power. Moreover, the detail in her face implies that she is a specific person. On the other hand, not only is the woman in *Cartuchos* looking away, but the use of abstraction makes her more generic and presents her as a symbol of a passive indigenous woman. This implication of passiveness is harmful as it insinuates a lack of agency.

In addition to perpetuating offensive stereotypes about indigenous and afrolatinx peoples, Guayasamín's separation of these identities has several negative implications.[118] Through his use of discrete themes, Guayasamín implies that peoples from these groups do not exist in the same space, a fact that is furthered by Guayasamín's use of different geographies for each group. Such categorization recalls *costumbrista* categorization of latinx identities from the nineteenth century. By defining each group with specific attributes and geographic locations, as seen in Guayasamín's descriptions of each group, Guayasamín imposes specific characteristics onto them. In this case, such characteristics align with stereotypes about each group.

The separation of these groups also emphasizes the differences between them and as a result, implies that the groups are in opposition to one another. Moreover, by centering the series on the mestizx identity, he marginalizes indigenous and afrolatinx identities even more, making them, as Carlos Jáuregui points out, "part of and apart from the nation."[119] Once again, such a representation recalls the implicit distance of Sabogal's indigenous peoples, the idea that marginalized communities exist, but in a place that is separate from the viewer.

Moreover, such separation also implies that these marginalized groups are holding back Ecuador, that they are resistant to change and prevent the modernization of the nation.[120] Lastly, Guayasamín presents these groups as encompassing all Ecuadorian identities. Consequently, he excludes people who exist between these identities, such as people of afrolatinx and indigenous heritage, and people who exist outside of them, such as the indigenous peoples of the Ecuadorian jungle.

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[118] In the only mural from *Huacayñán*, Guayasamín created panels with each of the different groups. The mural was movable, meaning that you could unite and combine the panels in different ways. However, each panel was still comprised of only one group. For more information on this mural, see the last section of Jáuregui's article.

[119] Jáuregui, 45.

[120] Ibid., 38.

The issues with these works can be attributed, in part, to the government's role in commissioning this series. In using *indigenismo* as a national policy, Carrión pushed it out of the avant-garde. Moreover, by commission a series that represents mestizx people both alongside and separate from other groups in Ecuador, Carrión was able to legitimize Ecuador as a mestizx nation. In other words, this series' depiction of stereotyped, marginalized identities only works to support the focus on a mestizx-oriented national identity. It communicates the idea that the work is a survey of the Ecuadorian nation, one where indigenous peoples are "serene" and afrolatinx peoples are "primitive."

CONCLUSION

Guayasamín's work demonstrates *indigenismo*'s potential as an effective socio-political movement. As seen in Chapter One, *indigenismo* was flawed from the beginning. In the 1920s, Mariátegui's understanding of *indigenismo* advocated for a politically potent representation of indigenous peoples. This version of *indigenismo* is particularly important as it was one of the first Marxist movements in Latin America, and it tied Marxist theory to Latin American identity and society. However, despite contradictory points made in Mariátegui's writing, artworks from that period failed to represent indigenous peoples in a modern reality and glorified indigenous peoples in an intangible past instead.

This issue with Mariátegui's *indigenismo* demonstrates an interesting moment in which theory and art fail to align, all within a specifically Andean context. Moreover, it provides an interesting example of the complexity of race in Latin America as it shows how a postcolonial interest in indigeneity in Latin America is not free of societal prejudices.

In the 1930s, following a shift in international politics and rampant criticisms of Mariátegui's *indigenismo*, Ecuadorian *indigenistas* such as Eduardo Kingman began to depict indigenous peoples in modern settings. As a result, *indigenistas* improved this aspect of Mariátegui's *indigenismo* and inserted indigenous peoples into the viewer's time and space. Guayasamín's early works went even a step further by adding an element of emotional energy to *indigenista* works.

By creating an emotional impact on the viewer, Guayasamín linked the viewer and the figures represented. He invited the viewer to think about the suffering that the figures represented endure and in doing so, made the viewer a lot more likely to care about the injustices depicted. However, as seen in Chapter Two, despite these improvements in pictorial

indigenismo, these works continued to be flawed. Guayasamín's use of generalization tied indigenous peoples to their socio-political situation and defined indigenous peoples as oppressed, as poor workers, and as lacking agency. As a result, the evolution of indigenismo and its issues are illustrated through these works from the 1930s.

Later, in the mid-1940s, the Ecuadorian government adopted *indigenismo* as a national policy, and *indigenismo* fell out of favor with the avant-garde. Carrión, then director of the CCE, commissioned Guayasamín's series *Huacayñán*, consequently tying the series to the government's less radical version of *indigenismo*. As explored in Chapter Three, *Huacayñán*'s figures are even more symbolic than those in Guayasamín's earlier works. Moreover, Guayasamín's categorization and stereotyping of different Ecuadorian groups in the work recalls issues with Mariátegui's philosophy.

Huacayñán illustrates how a movement can be reactionary. In particular, it shows how national understandings of race can be imposed upon an artwork, and the issues that arise with such imposition. I find this idea of the nation's interest in forming a race-related national identity to be especially interesting as it correlates to Latin American countries' want to define themselves in the postcolonial era. As briefly explored with my discussion of *mestizaje*, governmental efforts to define what it means to be Latin American have been and always will be flawed in one way or another and were mostly used to place Latin America and Latin American people in contrast to other countries and identities.

Moving forward, I think that there is an interesting contrast between Guayasamín's relationship with Carrión and Sabogal's relationship with Mariátegui. Time and time again, the relationship between intellectuals and artists in the avant-garde define and push concepts of

culture, and I think that a comparison of these two relationships could lead to an interesting study of the avant-garde in Latin American.

Moreover, as I worked on this thesis, I noticed that almost all rhetoric concerning indigenous peoples in Andean countries failed to mention indigenous groups from the jungle regions. An investigation into why Andean indigeneity is so focused on indigenous groups from the mountain regions could be quite interesting and could lead to a more robust critique of *indigenismo*. Lastly, I think that Guayasamín's interest in categorizing race and pain in *Huacayñán* could greatly benefit from a study of Ecuadorian casta paintings and censuses could enlighten some of the points discussed in my final chapter.

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“Yo soy un indio ¡Carajo!,” YouTube video, 0:13, Lucherto, September 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEBHmAyMBXk.

FIGURES

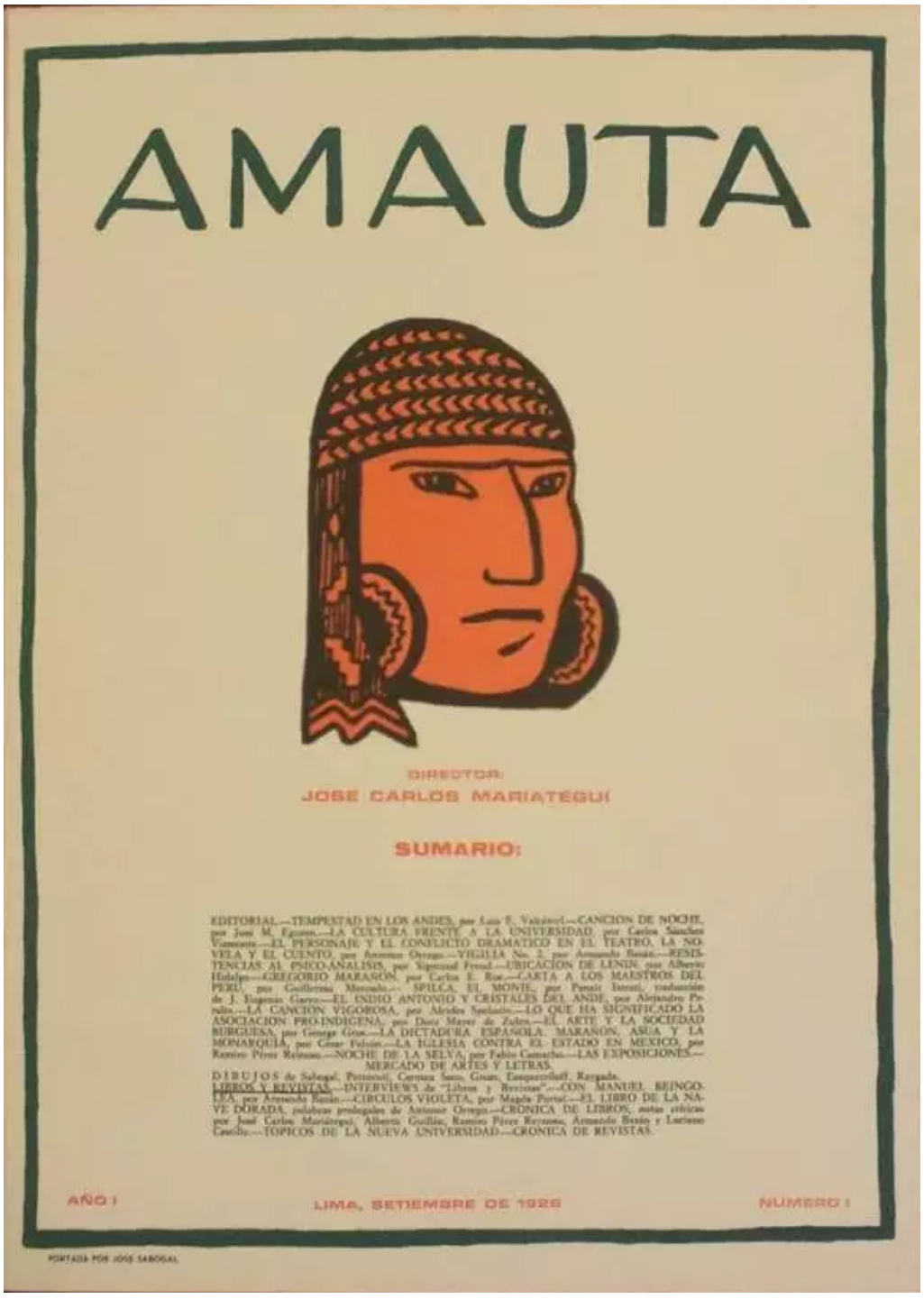

Figure 1. José Sabogal, Cover for *Amauta* (September 1926).

Figure 2. José Sabogal, *Alcalde de Chinchero: Varayoc* [The Mayor of Chinchero: Varayoc], 1925. Oil on canvas.

Figure 3. José Sabogal, *India del Collao* [Indian from Collao], 1925. Oil on canvas.

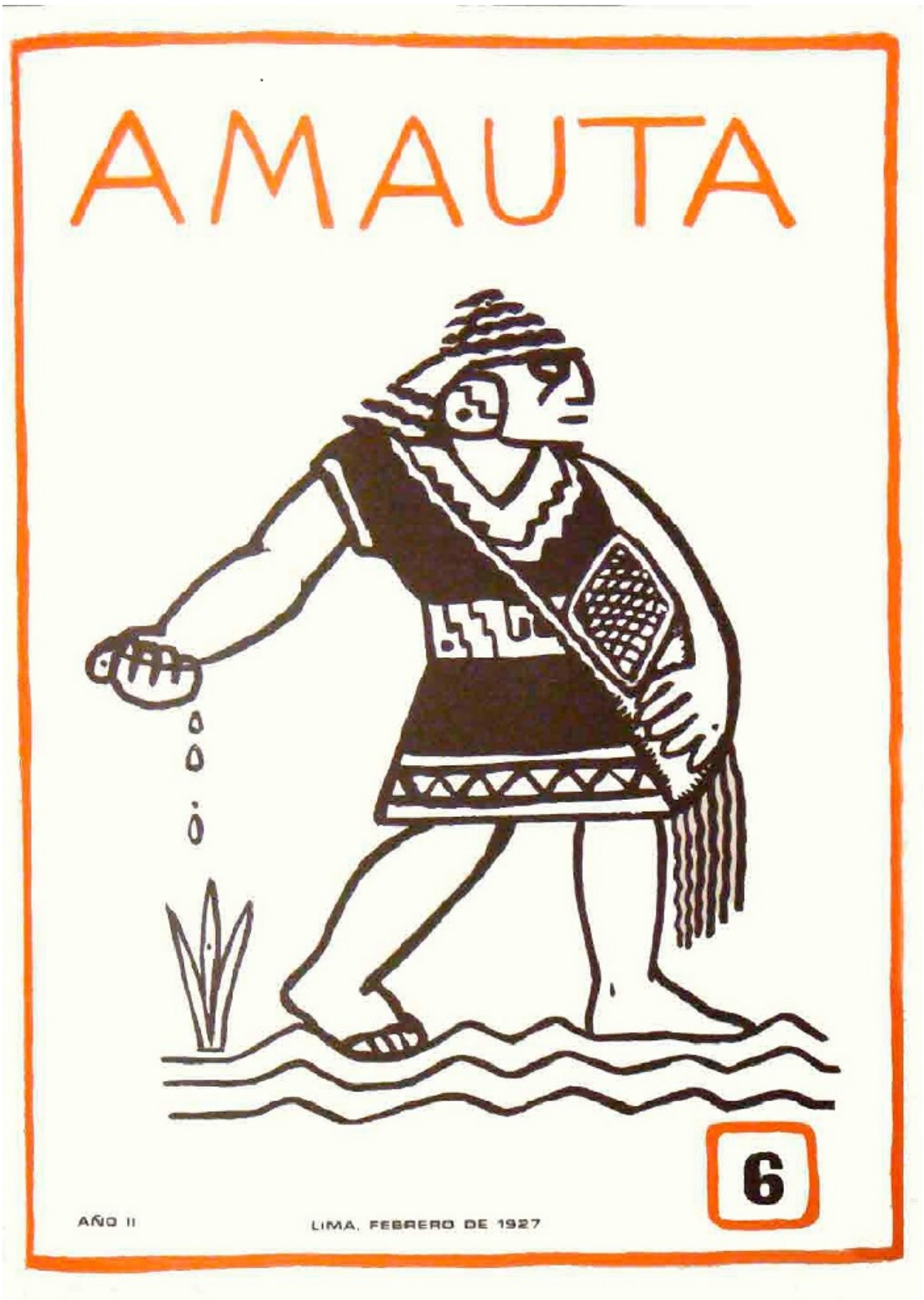

Figure 4. José Sabogal, *El Sembrador* [The Sower], 1927. Woodcut. Cover for *Amauta* (January 1927).

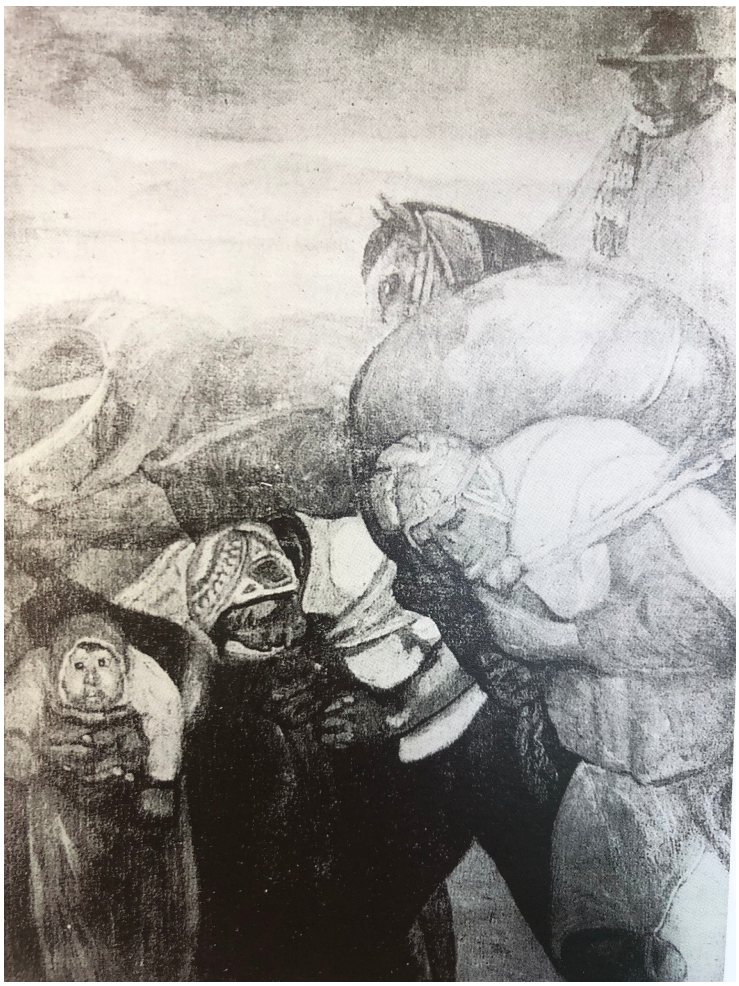

Figure 5. José Sabogal, *Los Pongos* [Indigenous workers], 1925. Oil on canvas. Reproduced in *Amauta* 3:16 (July 1928): 11.

Figure 6. Eduardo Kingman, *Los Guandos* [The Haulers], 1941. Oil on canvas. Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana in Quito.

Figure 7. Oswaldo Guayasamín, *La Huelga* [The Strike], 1940. Oil on canvas. Maruja Monteverde Collection, Quito.

Figure 8. Oswaldo Guayasamín, *El Silencio* [The Silence], 1940. Oil on canvas. Fundación Capriles de Arte Latinoamericano, Caracas.

Figure 9. Oswaldo Guayasamín, *Los Trabajadores* [The Workers], 1942. Oil on canvas.

Figure 10. Oswaldo Guayasamín, *Niños Muertos* [Dead Children], 1942. Oil on canvas. Maruja Monteverde Collection, Quito.

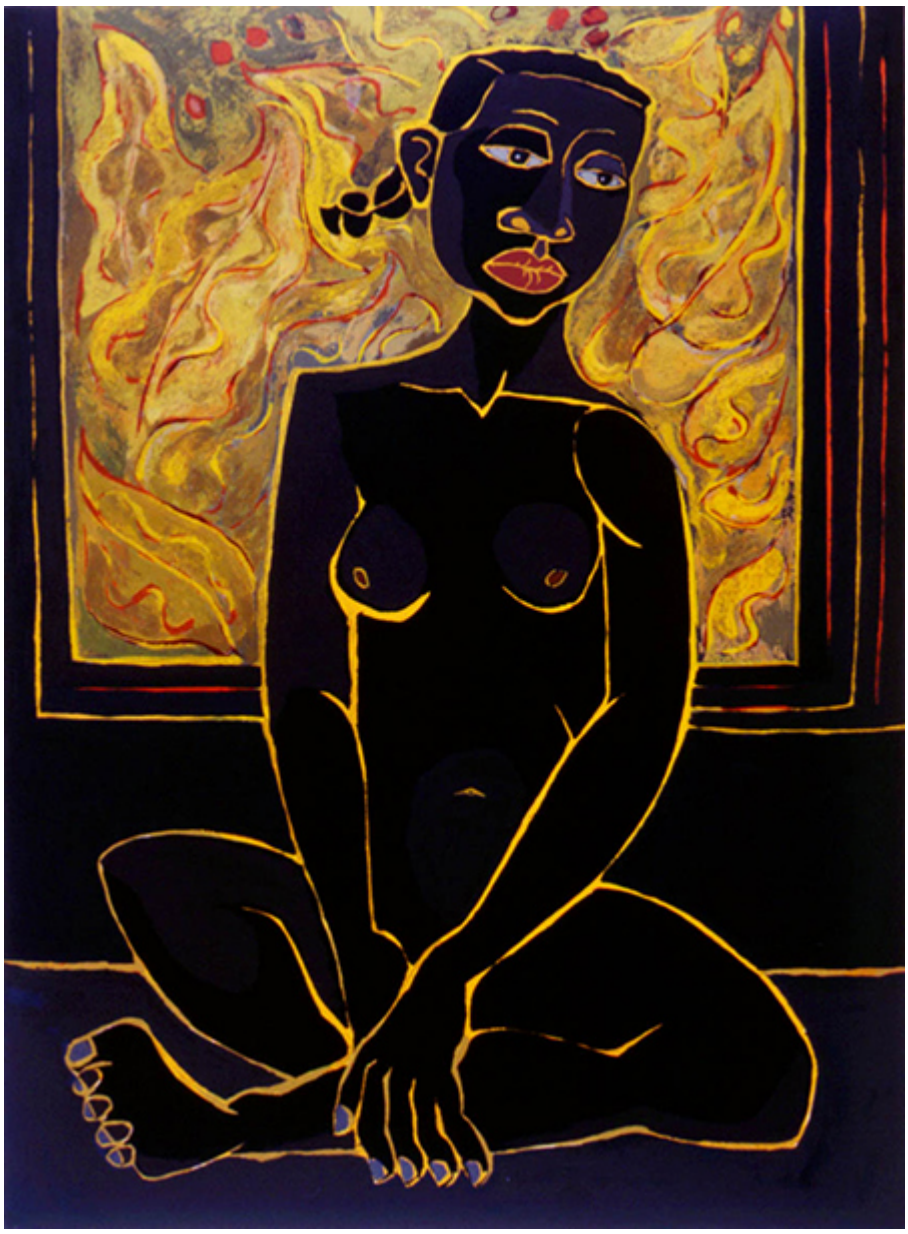

Figure 11. Oswaldo Guayasamín, *Niña Negra* [Black Girl], 1948. Oil on canvas.

Figure 12. Oswaldo Guayasamín, *La Marimba* [The Marimba], 1951. Oil on canvas. Maruja Monteverde Collection, Quito.

Figure 13. Oswaldo Guayasamín, *Cartuchos* [Calla Lilies], n.d. Oil on canvas.

BIOGRAPHY

Katherine Gaard was born in Querétaro, México in 1997. After moving around, her family finally settled in San Antonio, Texas in 2006. She enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin in 2015, majoring in Art History and Plan II with a minor in Portuguese. In college, she discovered her passion for Latin American art. As a Peruvian-American, she is particularly interested in modern and contemporary Andean art. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 2019 and plans to participate in the Fulbright Program in Brazil in 2020.